

# OPINIONS AND DECLARATIONS RENDERED BY THE INTER- NATIONAL COMMISSION ON ZOOLOGICAL NOMENCLATURE

*Edited by*

**FRANCIS HEMMING, C.M.G., C.B.E.**  
Secretary to the Commission

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## **DIRECTION 65**

Determination of the form to be adopted for the name  
of the XVIIIth Century Viennese medical practitioner  
commonly known as "Laurenti"



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# INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON ZOOLOGICAL NOMENCLATURE

## COMPOSITION AT THE TIME OF THE ADOPTION OF THE RULING GIVEN IN DIRECTION 65

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(12th August 1953)

*Vice-President* : Senhor Dr. Afranio do AMARAL (*Sao Paulo, Brazil*) (12th August 1953)

*Secretary* : Mr. Francis HEMMING (*London, England*) (27th July 1948)

### B. The Members of the Commission

(*Arranged in order of precedence by reference to date of election or of most recent re-election, as prescribed by the International Congress of Zoology*)

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(1st January 1947)

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Doc. Dr. Ferdinand PRANTL (*Národní Museum V Praze, Prague, Czechoslovakia*) (30th October 1954)

Professor Dr. Wilhelm KÜHNELT (*Zoologisches Institut der Universität, Vienna, Austria*) (6th November 1954)

Professor F. S. BODENHEIMER (*The Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Israel*) (11th November 1954)

Professor Ernst MAYR (*Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard College, Cambridge, Massachusetts, U.S.A.*) (4th December 1954)

Professor Enrico TORTONESE (*Museo di Storia Naturale "G. Doria", Genova, Italy*) (16th December 1954)

## DIRECTION 65

### DETERMINATION OF THE FORM TO BE ADOPTED FOR THE NAME OF THE XVIIIITH CENTURY VIENNESE MEDICAL PRACTITIONER COMMONLY KNOWN AS “ LAURENTI ”

RULING :—(1) It is hereby ruled :—

- (a) that the name of the author of the work relating to snakes and snake venoms bearing the title “ Specimen medicum ” published in Vienna in 1768 was “ Laurenti ” ;
- (b) that the foregoing does not exclude the possibility that Laurenti may also have used a Latinised version of his name, though there is no evidence that he ever did so ;
- (c) that, if Laurenti had ever employed such a version of his name, the correct form of that name would have been “ Laurentius ” and not “ Laurentus ”.

(2) It is hereby directed that, when any zoological name published by the foregoing author is cited either in an *Official List* or in an *Official Index*, the name of the author is to be cited in the form “ Laurenti ”.

(3) The title of the under-mentioned work by Laurenti is hereby placed on the *Official List of Works Approved as Available for Zoological Nomenclature* with the Title Number 29, and with an endorsement in the terms specified in (1) above :—

Laurenti (J.N.), 1768, *Specimen medicum, exhibens Synopsin Reptilium emendatam cum Experimentis circa Venena et Antidota Reptilium austriacorum.*

## I. THE STATEMENT OF THE CASE

The present *Direction*, the need for which came to light in connection with the preparations for the publication of the *Official Lists* in book-form, is based upon proposals submitted to the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature by the Secretary in the following paper on 18th December 1956 :—

**Request for a ruling as to the form to be adopted for the name of the XVIIIth century Viennese medical practitioner commonly known as “Laurenti” when citing the name of that author in entries on the “Official Lists” and “Official Indexes”**

By FRANCIS HEMMING, C.M.G., C.B.E.

(*Secretary to the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature*)

The purpose of the present note is to obtain directions from the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature as to the form to be adopted for the name of the XVIIIth century Viennese medical practitioner commonly known as “Laurenti”, when citing the name of that author in entries on the *Official Lists* and *Official Indexes*. Instructions on this matter are required in connection with the arrangements now well advanced for the publication of the foregoing *Lists* and *Indexes* in book-form. The relevant particulars are given below.

2. The author referred to above is only known to have written one work which was published in Vienna in 1768 with the following Latin title :—

*IOSEPHI NICOLAI LAURENTI, austriaci viennensis, Specimen medicum, exhibens Synopsis Reptilium emendatum cum Experimentis circa Venena et Antidota Reptilium austriacorum.*

3. The question to be decided is whether the name of the author of the above work should, as hitherto, be treated as having been "Laurenti" or whether the Latinised version "Laurentius" is the correct form of this name. This question was raised some years ago by Dr. Heinz Wermuth (*Zoologisches Museum, Berlin*) who there advocated the adoption of the Latinised version of the name of the author of the *Specimen medicum* (Wermuth, 1950, *Deuts. zool. Z.* 1(2) : 83, *nota*). The passage in question reads as follows : "Im allgemeinen wird dieser Autor als 'Laurenti' zitiert. Der Titel seiner Publikation lautet aber : 'Iosephi Nicolai Laurenti . . . specimen medicum, . . .', und hierin erscheint der Name in Genitiv. Der Nominativ heisst hiernach Laurentus (Latinisierung von Lorenz?) und nicht Laurenti (us) da er sonst im 2 Fall zu Laurentii ungewandelt werden müsste".

4. Quite recently (September 1956) Dr. Wermuth and I agreed that it was unsatisfactory that the above matter should be left in an indeterminate state and that in the interests of uniformity it was desirable that an authoritative Ruling should be obtained from the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature. It was agreed between us that for this purpose an investigation of contemporary and near-contemporary zoological or medical literature was necessary in order to ascertain whether there existed any references which might throw light on the question of the correct form of the name of the author in question. Second, there was the subsidiary question of what would be the correct Latin form for this man's name if it were to be established that his name ought to be cited in Latinised form.

5. On the first of these questions I was fortunate in being able to draw upon the unrivalled knowledge of medical history possessed by Professor Charles Singer, Professor Emeritus of the History of Medicine at University College in the University of London. Professor Singer whom I consulted during a visit which I paid to him at the time when this investigation was in progress suggested that as a start we should consult the monumental *Dictionnaire historique de la Médecine ancienne et moderne* produced in the early part of the XIXth century by Jean-Eugène Dezeimeris (b. 1790 ; d. 1852). Reference to the volume of this work published in 1837 (2(2)) : 409) at once established



that the author whose name we were investigating had in fact been known by the name "Laurenti". The passage in question reads as follows :—

LAURENTI (Joseph Nicolas), médecin praticien à Vienne, mort le 17 février 1805, à l'âge de soixante-dix ans, se fit connaître par sa dissertation inaugurale, dans laquelle il traite des reptiles réputés venimeux en général, et de ceux de l'Autriche en particulier. Il démontra, par le rapprochement des observations publiées, et surtout par un grand nombre d'expériences sur des animaux, que beaucoup de reptiles regardés par le peuple comme extrêmement venimeux étaient incapables de produire chez l'homme des accidens sérieux, ou ne faisaient que des blessures tout-à-fait insignifiantes. Laurenti n'a rien écrit depuis cette dissertation ; en voici le titre : [Here follows the title of the *Specimen medicum*].

6. Immediately after my return to London from Cornwall (where Professor Singer now lives) I received the following Report (dated 13th October 1956) from Professor L. W. Grensted, Consulting Classical Adviser to the International Commission, which, while not throwing any light on the name of the individual with whom we are here concerned, showed that the version "Laurenti" was an acceptable name :—

I have now done a little more research into this, both in the Bodleian Library Catalogue and in that of the British Museum.

I find that "Laurenti" is a good name-form. There are books by Bartolomeo Laurenti published at Bologna in 1691 (i.e. Italian) and by Paul-Etienne Laurenti at Bordeaux in 1898 (i.e. French).

7. On 14th November 1956 Mr. A. Cockburn Townsend, Librarian to the British Museum (Natural History) furnished the following information bearing upon the form of the name of the man with whom we are concerned and supporting the conclusion that the proper form of his name was "Laurenti" :—

I think that there is little doubt that the vernacular form of the author's name is "Laurenti". Fitzinger, in an historical account of the Vienna Zoologisch-Botanische Gesellschaft (*SitzBer Acad. Wien*, 1856, 21 : 443) mentions a certain collection as that upon which "Laurenti" founded his *Specimen medicum* ; Engelmann, *Bibl. Hist. nat.*, 1846 : 698, cites "Laurenti" in the Index, as does Cobres, *Delic. Cobres*, 1782, p. 851.

In more recent works, such as Meyers, *Konversations-Lexicon* and the *Enciclopedia Italiana*, the name is also given as "Laurenti". Sherborn's original slip for the *Index Animalium* has "Laurenti" on it in two places.

8. The evidence set out above appears to me to show conclusively that the man with whom we are concerned was known by the name "Laurenti", though this does not exclude the possibility that in addition he was sometimes known also by a Latinised version of his name.

9. In these circumstances the question of what would be the correct Latinised form for a Latinised version of this man's name assumes much less importance than appeared likely at the beginning of the present investigation. It must be noted, however, that both the specialists (L. W. Grensted ; A. Cockburn Townsend) who have advised on this subject are of the opinion that the correct form would be "Laurentius" and not "Laurentus". In this connection the latter has recalled that in Latin proper names ending with the termination "-ius" are declined like *filius*, of which the genitive singular is either *fili* or *fili*. The contracted genitive singular in "-i" is often found in the classical writers.

10. Since the completion of the present investigation, I have been in consultation with Dr. Heinz Wermuth (by whom as already explained, the present matter was first raised) and also with Professor Robert Mertens (*Frankfurt a. M.*), who had expressed interest in the matter in view of his having an application before the International Commission which involves a name first published in the *Specimen medicum*.<sup>1</sup> Both these specialists share my conclusion that the International Commission should be asked to give a Ruling in this sense. Since the present application is concerned with the name of a nomenclatorially available book, it will be necessary under the General Directives given to the Commission by the International Congresses of Zoology for the title of Laurenti's *Specimen medicum* of 1768 to be placed on the *Official List of Works Approved as Available for Zoological Nomenclature* with an endorsement, as suggested above, as to the correct form of its author's name.

11. I accordingly ask the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature :—

(1) to give a Ruling :—

- (a) that the name of the author of the work entitled *Specimen medicum* . . . published in 1768 was "Laurenti" ;
- (b) that the foregoing does not exclude the possibility that Laurenti may also have used a Latinised version of his name, though there is no evidence that he ever did so ;
- (c) that if Laurenti had ever employed such a version of his name, the correct form would have been "Laurentius" and not "Laurentus" ;

<sup>1</sup> The application here referred to related to the name *Hyla venulosa* Laurenti, 1768. It was published on 31st October 1956 (*Bull. zool. Nomencl.* 12 : 287.)

- (2) to direct that, when any name published by the foregoing author is cited either in an *Official List* or in an *Official Index*, the name of the author is to be entered as "Laurenti";
- (3) to place the title of the work by Laurenti published in 1768 under the title *Specimen medicum . . .* on the *Official List of Works Approved as Available for Zoological Nomenclature* with the endorsement as to the form of the name of the author as specified in (1) above.

**2. Registration of the present application :** Upon the receipt of the paper by the Secretary reproduced in paragraph 1 above, the question of the form to be adopted for the name of the author commonly known as "Laurenti" was allotted the Registered Number Z.N.(S.) 1164.

## II. THE DECISION TAKEN BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON ZOOLOGICAL NOMENCLATURE

**3. Issue of Voting Paper V.P.(O.M.)(56)30 :** On 18th December 1956 a Voting Paper (V.P.(O.M.)(56)30) was issued in which the Members of the Commission were invited to vote either for, or against, "the proposal relating to the correct form of the name of the author of the work published in 1768 under the title *Specimen medicum*, commonly known as "Laurenti", recommended in paragraph 11 of the memorandum by the Secretary, numbered Z.N.(S.) 1164, submitted simultaneously with the present Voting Paper" [i.e. in the paragraph numbered as above in the paper reproduced in the first paragraph of the present *Direction*].

**4. The Prescribed Voting Period :** As the foregoing Voting Paper was issued under the One-Month Rule, the Prescribed Voting Period closed on 18th January 1957.



**5. Particulars of the Voting on Voting Paper V.P.(O.M.)(56)30 :**

At the close of the Prescribed Voting Period, the state of the voting on Voting Paper V.P.(O.M.)(56)30 was as follows :—

(a) *Affirmative Votes had been given by the following twenty-three (23) Commissioners (arranged in the order in which Votes were received) :*

Riley ; Mayr ; Mertens ; Sylvester-Bradley ; Holthuis ; Hering ; do Amaral ; Lemche ; Bradley (J.C.) ; Miller ; Key ; Esaki ; Boschma ; Stoll ; Tortonese ; Cabrera ; Jaczewski ; Vokes ; Hemming ; Kühnelt ; Bodenheimer ; Bonnet ; Dymond ;

(b) *Negative Votes, one (1) :*

Prantl ;

(c) *Prevented from Voting by interruption of postal communications consequent upon political disturbances, one (1) :*

Hankó ;

(d) *Voting Papers not returned :*

None.

**6. Declaration of Result of Vote :** On 19th January 1957, Mr. Hemming, Secretary to the International Commission, acting as Returning Officer for the Vote taken on Voting Paper V.P.(O.M.)(56)30, signed a Certificate that the Votes cast were as set out in paragraph 5 above and declaring that the proposal submitted in the foregoing Voting Paper had been duly adopted and that the decision so taken was the decision of the International Commission in the matter aforesaid.

7. Preparation of the Ruling given in the present "Direction" : On 14th February 1957 Mr. Hemming prepared the Ruling given in the present *Direction* and at the same time signed a Certificate that the terms of that Ruling were in complete accord with those of the proposal approved by the International Commission in its Vote on Voting Paper V.P.(O.M.)(56)30.

8. The prescribed procedures were duly complied with by the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature in dealing with the present case, and the present *Direction* is accordingly hereby rendered in the name of the said International Commission by the under-signed Francis Hemming, Secretary to the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature, in virtue of all and every the powers conferred upon him in that behalf.

9. The present *Direction* shall be known as *Direction Sixty-Five* (65) of the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature.

DONE in London, this Fourteenth day of February, Nineteen Hundred and Fifty-Seven.

*Secretary to the International Commission  
on Zoological Nomenclature*

**FRANCIS HEMMING**